

**IN THE CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) An image display controlling apparatus for adjusting the contrast of an image, said apparatus comprising:

discriminating means for receiving an image signal, for discriminating a signal format of the image signal, the signal format including at least one of lightness of the image and color of the image, and for generating a discrimination signal based on the result of said discriminating;

controller means for receiving the discrimination signal and for generating a control signal based on the received discrimination signal;

level adjustment means for receiving the control signal and for adjusting a luminance signal level of the image signal based on the received control signal;

display means for displaying an image in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level;

illuminating means for illuminating said display means, the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained by said illuminating means; and

illumination controlling means, including:

switching regulator means for receiving the control signal, for periodically receiving notification of the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means, and for generating a DC signal based on the received control signal and the periodically received notification of the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means, and

oscillator means for receiving the DC signal and  
for controlling the brightness of the illumination  
provided by said illuminating means based on the  
~~control~~-received DC signal;

the control signal including a setting value  
associated with a particular image contrast such that if  
the setting value would require said illumination  
controlling means to lower the illumination brightness to  
be below the predetermined range, said illumination  
controlling means instead maintains the illumination  
brightness within the predetermined range to maintain the  
stable discharge current and said level adjustment means  
lowers the luminance signal level according to the setting  
value until the particular image contrast associated with  
the setting value is attained.

2.-4. (cancelled)

5. (previously presented) The image display controlling  
apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

display image generating means for converting the  
image which is in accordance with the adjusted luminance  
signal level into a signal matched to said display means.

6. (previously presented) The image display controlling  
apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said display means is a  
liquid crystal display.

7. (currently amended) An image display controlling  
method for adjusting the contrast of an image, said method  
comprising:

discriminating a signal format of an image signal, the  
signal format including at least one of lightness of the  
image and color of the image, and generating a  
discrimination signal based on the result of said  
discriminating step;

generating a control signal based on the discrimination signal;

adjusting a luminance signal level of the image signal based on the control signal;

displaying an image in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level;

providing illumination for the displayed image, the brightness of the illumination having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained;

periodically receiving notification of the brightness of the brightness of the illumination provided for the displayed image;

generating a DC signal based on the control signal and the periodically received notification of the brightness of the illumination; and

controlling the brightness of the illumination provided for the displayed image based on the ~~control~~ DC signal, ~~the brightness of the illumination having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained;~~

the control signal including a setting value associated with a particular image contrast such that if the setting value would require the illumination brightness be below the predetermined range, said illumination step instead maintains the illumination brightness within the predetermined range to maintain the stable discharge current and said adjusting step lowers the luminance signal level until the particular image contrast associated with the setting value is attained.

8.-10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) The image display controlling method according to claim 7, wherein the displayed image which

is in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level is converted into a signal matched to a display unit.

12. (previously presented) The image display controlling method according to claim 7, wherein the displayed image is displayed using a liquid crystal display.

13. (currently amended) An imaging apparatus, comprising:

image signal generating means for imaging an object to generate an image signal;

discriminating means for receiving the image signal, for discriminating a signal format of the image signal, the signal format including at least one of lightness of the image and color of the image, and for generating a discrimination signal based on the result of said discriminating;

controller means for receiving the discrimination signal and for generating a control signal based on the received discrimination signal;

level adjustment means for receiving the control signal and for adjusting a luminance signal level in the input image signal based on the received control signal;

display means for displaying an image in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level;

illuminating means for illuminating said display means, the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained by said illuminating means; and

illumination controlling means, including:

switching regulator means for receiving the control signal, for periodically receiving notification of the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means, and for generating a DC signal based on the received control

signal and the periodically received notification of the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means, and

oscillator means for receiving the DC signal and for controlling the brightness of the illumination provided by said illumination means based on said ~~control~~ the received DC signal;

the control signal including a setting value associated with a particular image contrast such that if the setting value would require said illumination controlling means to lower the illumination brightness to be below the predetermined range, said illumination controlling means instead maintains the illumination brightness within the predetermined range to maintain the stable discharge current and said level adjustment means lowers the luminance signal level according to the setting value until the particular image contrast associated with the setting value is attained.

14.-16. (cancelled)

17. (previously presented) The imaging apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising

display image generating means for converting the image which is in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level into a signal matched to said display means.

18. (previously presented) The imaging apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said display means is a liquid crystal display.

19. (currently amended) A viewfinder device for viewing an image based on an image signal provided by an imaging apparatus, said viewfinder device comprising:

discriminating means for discriminating a signal format of the image signal, the signal format including at least one of lightness of the image and color of the image,

and for generating a discrimination signal based on the result of said discriminating;

controller means for receiving the discrimination signal and for generating a control signal based on the received discrimination signal;

level adjustment means for receiving the control signal and for adjusting a luminance signal level of the image signal based on the received control signal;

display means for displaying an image in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level;

illuminating means for illuminating said display means, the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means having a predetermined range below which stable discharge current cannot be maintained by said illuminating means; and

illumination controlling means, including:

switching regulator means for receiving the control signal, for periodically receiving notification of the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means, and for generating a DC signal based on the received control signal and the periodically received notification of the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means, and

oscillator means for receiving the DC signal and for controlling the brightness of the illumination provided by said illuminating means based on the ~~control~~ received DC signal;

the control signal including a setting value associated with a particular image contrast such that if the setting value would require said illumination controlling means to lower the illumination brightness to be below the predetermined range, said illumination

controlling means instead maintains the illumination brightness within the predetermined range to maintain the stable discharge current and said level adjustment means lowers the luminance signal level according to the setting value until the particular image contrast associated with the setting value is attained.

20.-22. (cancelled)

23. (previously presented) The viewfinder device according to claim 19, further comprising:

displayed image generating means for converting the image which is in accordance with the adjusted luminance signal level into a signal matched to said display means.

24. (previously presented) The viewfinder device according to claim 19, wherein said display means is a liquid crystal display.

25. (previously presented) The viewfinder device according to claim 19, wherein said controller means includes means for exchanging the control information with said imaging apparatus, and the viewfinder device makes an inquiry to the imaging apparatus as to whether the imaging apparatus is controlling, to adjust the contrast of the displayed image, at least one of the brightness of the illumination and the luminance signal level of the image signal.